

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

MC-02 ACDA-19 AEC-11 L-03 EB-11 NIC-01 DRC-01 /156 W

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R 290822Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0495

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

ANEMBASSY WELLINGHHN 0507

HCINCPAC

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 1904

CINCPAC FOR P

S D

E.O. 11GT:18GD

TAGS: MARR, SN

SUBJ: SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPPING - ANZUK STORES BASIN

REF: SINGAPORE 1558

1. SUMMARY: PERMSEC MFA BOGAARS ADVISED DEPUTY
UK HICOM WATTS APRIL 26 THAT GOS (A) WOULD DO
WMYT IT COULD TO RESTRICT NUCBER OF COMMUNIST
MERCHANT VESSELS FROM ENTERING STRAITS OF JOHORE,
AND (B) WOULD OVERHAUL ITS PROCEDURESSBO INSURE ADE-
QUATE NO
IFICATIOCEIN EXCEPTIONAL CASES. IF
GOS DOES NOT TAKE PROMISED CORRECTIVE ACTION,
UK MIGHT TAKE MATTER UP WITH PRIME MINISTER
LEE DURING HIS VISIT TO LONDON IN JUNE. END
SUMMARY.

2. DEPUTY UK HICOM WATTS INFORMED DCM APRIL 27

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THAT HE HAD MET WITH PERMSEC MFA BOGGARS APRIL 26

TO DISCUSS PROBLEM OF COMMUNIST MERCHANT SHIPPING
USE OF PSA BERTHS AT ANZUK STORES BASIN. (BETWEEN
JANUARY 28 AND APRIL 11 FIVE SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPS
AND TWO EAST GERMAN MERCHANT SHIPS HAVE DOCKED AT
THESE BERTHS IN THE STORES BASIN AND ON FOUR OCCA-
SIONS NO ADVANCE NOTICE WAS GIVEN TO ANZUK AUTHORITIES.)
BOGAARS WAS FULLY BRIEFED ON PROBLEM SINCE UK HICOM
FALLE HAD MENTIONED IT TO BOGAARS EARLIER IN FAREWELL
CALL ON WATTS HAD REVIEWED PROBLEM ON SOME DETAIL
ON APRIL 18 WITH PERMSEC MINDEF PANG TEE POW WHO HAD
SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH BOGAARS.

3. BOGAARS TOLD WATTS THAT GOS HAD NOT INTENDED ANY
CHANGE IN ITS POLICY ON SOVIET SHIPPING AND THAT RECENT
UK REPRESENTATIONS TO GOS ON THIS MATTER HAD BEEN
"TAKEN AND UNDERSTOOD". HE POINTED OUT IT WAS NOT AN
EASY SITUATION FOR SINGAPORE SINCE THE SHIPPING
FACILITIES ON THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE ISLAND WERE
CONGESTED AND THERE WERE "ECONOMIC PRESSURES" INVOLVED.
IN VIEW OF THESE FACTORS IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR
GOS TO GIVE ANZUK POWERS ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE THAT COMMUNIST
MERCHANT SHIPPING WOULD BE KEPT OUT OF STRAITS OF
JOHORE. HOWEVER, HE PROMISED THAT GOS WOULD DO WHAT
IT COULD TO RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF COMMUNIST MERCHANT
VESSELS GOING NORTH OF CHANGI POINT AND ENTERING
STRAITS OF JOHORE. FURTHERMORE, GOS WOULD OVERHAUL
ITS PROCEDURES TO INSURE ADEQUATE NOTIFICATION ON
THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN EXCEPTIONS HAD TO BE MADE.

4. WATTS WAS ENCOURAGED BY BOGAARS FORTHCOMING
REMARKS, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF HIS UNSATISFACTORY
CONVERSATION WITH PERMSEC MINDEF, PANG TEE POW, ON
APRIL 18. AT THAT TIME WATTS HAD PRESENTED PANG
WITH A LIST OF 7 SOVIET/EAST GERMAN SHIPS THAT HAD
ENTERED THE STORES BASIN SINCE JANUARY, AND HAD
COMMENTED THAT ONCE THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS
REALIZED THEY COULD USE THE PSA DOCKS IN THE STORES
BASIN ALMOST AT WILL FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES, IT
WOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE THEY WOULD ATTEMPT TO
MOUNT SOME KIND OF INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION OPERATION

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AGAINST ANZUK WAR SHIPS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE
ZASIN. WATTS SAID HE HAD STRESSED TO PANG THAT IF THE
GOS WANTED TO KEEP THE ANZUK NAVAL PRESENCE IN
SINGAPORE, IT HAD TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SECURITY.

5. ACCORDING WATTS, PANG HAD REPLIED THAT GOS WANTED
TO RETAIN ANZUK NAVAL PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE, AND
EMPHASIZED THAT DESPITE LACK OF BUSINESS PROVIDED

BY ANZUK WARSHIPS AT SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD, COMMUNIST SHIPS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER THERE. (RECENTLY EX-CEPTION WAS MADE FOR YUGOSLAV MERCHANT SHIP, BUT NEITHER GOS NOR ANZUK POWERS BELIEVE THIS REPRESENTS ANY SECURITY PROBLEM.) HOWEVER, PANG SAID HE COULD NOT GIVE ASSURANCES WITH REGARD TO THE PSA BERTHS IN THE STORES BASIN SINCE THEY DID NOT FALL WITHIN MINDEF JURISDICTION. HE ALSO NOTED PRESSURES ON THE PORT FACILITIES ON THE SOUTHER PART OF THE ISLAND AND COMMENTED THAT MOST OF THE 7 SOVIET/EAST GERMAN SHIPS WHICH HAD LOADED CARGO (MOSTLY TIMBER) QUOTED FREIGHT RATES MUCH LOWER THAN OTHER SHIPPERS.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN BOGAARS' SUBSEQUENT UNDERTAKING TO RESTRICT NUMBER OF COMMUNIST VESSELS ENTERING STRAITS OF JOHORE AND TO OVERHAUL NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES, UK HICOM PLANS TO DO NOTHING FURTHER UNLESS IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT PROBLEM HAS NOT BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY ALLEVIATED. WATTS WAS FRANKLY UNCERTAIN WHETHER MFA/MINDEF WOULD BE ABLE TO DISCIPLINE PSA ON SUCH A MATTER WHEN ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS SEEMED TO FAVOR SUCH TRAFFIC. IF CORRECTIVE ACTION PROMISED BY BOGAARS IS NOT TAKEN, WATTS THOUGHT THAT PROBABLY ONLY THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE. IF SO, MATTER MIGHT HAVE TO AWAIT PM'S VISIT TO LONDON AT THE END OFFPUNE WHEN PROBLEM COULD BE TAKEN UP IN CONTEXT OF OTHER ISSUES IN WHICH LEE MIGHT CONCEIVABLY REQUEST UK ASSISTANCE.

7. IF SITUATION DOES NOT IMPROVE
SUGGEST DEPARTMENT
MAY WISH TO CONSIDER
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HAVING ADMIRAL GAYLER MENTION
HIS CONCERN DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO
SINGAPORE AT THE END OF MAY.
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